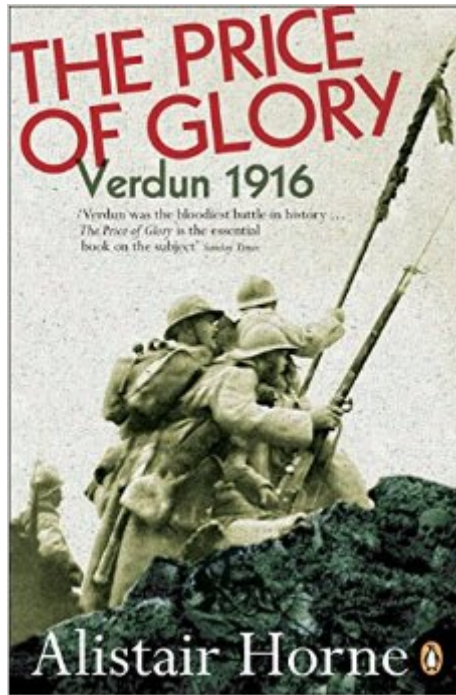


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The Price Of Glory: Verdun 1916



Synopsis

The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916 is the second book of Alistair Horne's trilogy, which includes The Fall of Paris and To Lose a Battle and tells the story of the great crises of the rivalry between France and Germany. The battle of Verdun lasted ten months. It was a battle in which at least 700,000 men fell, along a front of fifteen miles. Its aim was less to defeat the enemy than bleed him to death and a battleground whose once fertile terrain is even now a haunted wilderness. Alistair Horne's classic work, continuously in print for over fifty years, is a profoundly moving, sympathetic study of the battle and the men who fought there. It shows that Verdun is a key to understanding the First World War to the minds of those who waged it, the traditions that bound them and the world that gave them the opportunity. 'Verdun was the bloodiest battle in history ... The Price of Glory is the essential book on the subject' Â Â Sunday Times 'It has almost every merit ... Horne sorts out complicating issues with the greatest clarity. He has a splendid gift for depicting individuals' Â Â A.J.P. Taylor, Observer 'A masterpiece' Â Â The New York Times 'Compellingly told ... Alastair Horne uses contemporary accounts from both sides to build up a picture of heroism, mistakes, even farce' Â Â Sunday Telegraph 'Brilliantly written ... very readable; almost like a historical novel - except that it is true' Â Â Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery One of Britain's greatest historians, Sir Alistair Horne, CBE, is the author of a trilogy on the rivalry between France and Germany, The Price of Glory, The Fall of Paris and To Lose a Battle, as well as a two-volume life of Harold Macmillan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a recognized classic, published originally in 1963, and is frequently quoted or referenced in

other books about the wars of this century. In spite of its "classic" nature, the book remains as relevant and fresh as ever, helped along no doubt by minor touch ups in its numerous later editions as the author discovered new information. The book is so well researched, and so well written, and has such a depth of understanding and insight as to the gigantic human struggle that was the Battle of Verdun that it is hard to imagine anyone ever writing a better book on this subject. The range of topics covered runs the entire gamut, from daily life in the trenches, individual accounts of battle, the effect of technology and weaponry on the battle, and detailed analyses of the tactics and character of the military commanders of both sides. All of this is written in a prose that exudes compassion and respect for the soldiers that endured the Battle of Verdun. The author avoids the usual mistake of historians writing long after the fact of looking back with too much 20-20 hindsight. For instance, the Germans already had at their disposal aircraft that could drop enough bombs to have completely severed the only functioning road that the French had left to supply their troops at Verdun. Why didn't they? The author simply quotes a German commander : "We did not understand how airplanes were to be used in this war". With such simple statements, the author reveals a great many insights.

If you want to understand World War I, this book about the battle of Verdun is a must-read. A history professor once told me that World War I, the French Revolution, and the U.S. Constitution had inspired more history than any other events or episodes. World War I exhausted Europe; at the outset, its armies, navies and colonies held dominion over much of the globe, but at the end it was a pauper continent, with both victors and vanquished shattered by deaths and debts, reparations and revolutions. And Verdun marked a pivotal moment in this transformation, for here the generals revealed that they had too few ideas about how to win--but too many men still to feed into the meatgrinder. Because of battles like Verdun, many associate World War I with images and episodes straight from "All Quiet on the Western Front" or "Paths of Glory"--futile attacks and counterattacks, weary and shell-shocked men running across pulverized land only to be killed or maimed by mass-produced bullets and explosives, victims of Europe's collective skill at the industries of war. In this meta-narrative, the perpetrators of this mass slaughter remain hidden, distant, aloof, living in idyllic chateaux miles away from the mud and the blood, their actions either inscrutable or idiotic. Horne pulls back the curtain to reveal the character and personality of those generals, showing their unique strengths and weaknesses and how those character traits played themselves out in one of the greatest battles in human history. By writing so well about the decision-makers, he makes the churned earth and spilled blood more tragic--and more understandable.

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